

On knowledge and knowing

From the works of Helen Shigeko Isaacson, part IV

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INTRODUCTION

*The vocabulary is it not Hindi? ..
problem*

The pursuit of knowledge is one of man's natural functions. As he grows, his senses teach him the basic differences of hunger and satisfaction, hot and cold, soothing and harmful. He formulates sounds of speech, usually beginning with a syllable made of a consonant and a vowel. According to his abilities and his karma he learns things and accumulates likes and dislikes, ideas of the good or bad, beautiful and ugly, and so on, until in the end, coloured by these dualities, attached to things, people and places, the complexity of life obliterates the essence of his soul and he is only driven on by the circumstances that surround him.

This is not the kind of knowledge this book is about. The ancient sages of India, China and Japan, knowing that such worldly knowledge only hampers ^{one} from attaining to the Real Knowledge, showed the Great Road which is just as natural, but leads one to the eternal enjoyment, namely, the road that returns to the origin.

"The empirical self is reduced to inefficiency on account of his innate impure limiting conditions. He is driven to desire various objects, but owing to his inefficiency, is never fully satisfied. When the restless condition of his mind, brought about by his identification of himself with his conditioned selfhood, fully ceases, then he experiences the highest state."¹

"The paśu (conditioned individual) has all his knowledge born of sense and ideation. It is because of this sense and ideation-born knowledge that he loses the enjoyment of the ambrosia of the Highest Self and his innate freedom. Such sense and ideation-born knowledge is confined to the sphere of the tanmātrās, i.e. sound, colour and form, taste, touch and odour and the pleasures derived from them."²

1 Jaideva Singh, Siva Sūtras, 1979. Passage from Spandakārikā, thought to be a work of Vasugupta, 9th century.

2 Ibid. Also a verse from the same work, p. 18

The above is only one example of the Hindu conception. Let us take a look at how Sakyamuni, the Buddha, put it:

"The mind-system which is the source of the evil out-flowings consists of the five sense-organs and their accompanying sense-minds (vijñānas), all of which are unified in the discriminating-mind (manovijñāna). There is an unending succession of sense-concepts flowing into this discriminating or thinking mind, which combines them and discriminates them, and passes judgment upon them as to their goodness or badness. Then follows aversion to or desire for them, and attachment and deed; thus the entire system moves on continuously and closely bound together. But it fails to see and understand that what it sees and discriminates and grasps is only a manifestation of its own activity and has no other basis, and so the mind goes on erroneously perceiving and discriminating differences of forms and qualities, not remaining still even for a minute....."³

And again, from the same sutra, "...By destroying the knowledge that is based on discrimination, (the idea of) permanency and impermanency is kept back....Further, Mahāmāti, by 'right knowledge' is meant this: when names and appearances are seen as unobtainable owing to their mutual conditioning, there is no more rising of the Vijñānas, for nothing comes to annihilation, nothing abides everlastingly; and when there is, thus, no falling back into the stage of the philosophers, Śrāvakas, and Pratyekabuddhas, it is said that there is right knowledge."⁴

3 D. Goddard, A Buddhist Bible, 1938, p. 303 (The Lankavatara Scripture).

4 D. Suzuki, The Lankavatara Sutra, 1932, p. 195. Vijñana means knowledge or wisdom arising from perception. Sravakas: disciples of the Buddha; Pratyekabuddhas: Those who live in seclusion and obtain emancipation for themselves only.

Quite independent of these ideas which grew in India, Confucius pierced through to the crux of the problem in this way:

"What the Great Learning teaches, is-- to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.... Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in The Great Learning.

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things....

"From The Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides."

"It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered..."⁵

Mr. Legge points out in his explanatory notes that "The illustrious virtue is the virtuous nature which man derives from Heaven. This is perverted as man grows up, through defects of the physical constitution, through inward lusts, and through outward seductions; and the great business of life should be, to bring the nature back to its original purity....According to Chû Hsî, 'The illustration of

5 J. Legge, tr., The Great Learning, in The Four Books.

virtue is the root, and the renovation of the people is the completion (literally, the branches)... The root and the beginning are what is first, the completion and end are what is last.' ...Of the several steps described, the central one is the cultivation of the person, which, indeed, is called the root. This requires the heart to be correct, and that again, that the thoughts be sincere....The sincerity of the thoughts is to be obtained, according to Chû Hsî, by 'carrying our knowledge to its utmost extent, with the desire that there may be nothing which it shall not embrace,....and exhausting by examination the principle of things and affairs, with the desire that their uttermost point may be reached'. -- We feel that this explanation cannot be correct, or that, if it be correct, the teaching of the Chinese sage is far beyond and above the condition and capacity of men. How can we suppose that, in order to secure sincerity of thought and our self-cultivation, there is necessarily the study of all the phenomena of physics and metaphysics, and of the events of history?..."⁶

Here we must make a slight divergence, because this last comment of Mr. Legge's is exactly to the point of the problem that Westerners have when trying to follow these Eastern ideas, and because we must dispose of the problem before the discussion of haikai begins. First, it was not a supposition, but a fact, that, given the proper, true things to study and investigate, the results were as desired. This was the way to produce competent men of letters and the arts-- which did happen. Thought and language of ancient days-- in whatever country-- have this in common, the unity of all things and the vastness and ease which come with oneness. It is for us of these later ages, when everything which is whole, having undergone a ruthless severing, to pick up the pieces here and there and patch them together again, in order to see the One. Thus, in studying Confucius, it is for us to reach

6 Ibid., p. 310-11. (see next page for continuation of note)

(note 6)

Chu Hsi (1130-1200), a great scholar of the Sung period, annotated many Confucian books. He wrote: "The Great Learning speaks of the investigation of things but not of the investigation of Li (principles). The reason is that to investigate Li is like clutching at emptiness in which there is nothing to catch hold. When it simply speaks of 'the investigation of things', it means that we should seek for 'what is above shapes' through 'what is within shapes'....'There is no human intelligence utterly lacking knowledge, and no single thing in the world without Li. But because the investigation of Li is not exhaustive, this knowledge is in some ways not complete. This is why the first instruction of the Great Learning is that the student must, for all the separate things in the world, by means of the Li which he already understands, proceed further to gain exhaustive knowledge of those (with which he is not yet familiar), thus striving to extend (his knowledge) to the farthest point. When one has exerted oneself for a long time, finally one morning a complete understanding will open before one. Thereupon there will be a thorough comprehension of all the multitude of things, external or internal, fine or coarse, and every exercise of the mind will be marked by complete enlightenment." (Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 305-6).

to his vastness and profundity, rather than give it up. For the thought of sages is not grasped in a four-year course, but demands a whole lifetime of practise, with the whole body.

It was no doubt known and foreseen what would happen if events of history (which, in the case of the text here concerned, refers to instructive records of how sage emperors governed)⁷ were viewed separately from physics, metaphysics, and oneself. The result is the "state" of today. The disrespect and insincerity to each part is only ^{too} evident. This is the sort of mistake which leads youths of artificial education to write theses tearing apart Sacred Books handed down by the Gods.

Secondly, we must learn to accept ancient classics as the records of facts which they are, not as "mythology", "religion" or "philosophy". It would be a waste of time to read them as fantasy or curiosity. Buddhism and Confucian thought are only telling the facts of any universe and mankind, and offer solutions and roads to the highest excellence of man and the state. As for scriptures revealed by Gods, it is ^{a matter} rather of ^{challenge to} a ~~test~~ of our weak and limited beliefs, which ^{we can break} ~~can be broken~~ through if the desire to really know is there, i.e., if we have the genuineness in us.

The Confucian method of reaching to the real knowledge is by first learning the examples of excellence through the classics and by practising excellence in everyday behaviour. These help to return to the root.

7 The Book of History, which contains references to the Golden Age of China, c. 2357 to 2205 B.C. and the virtuous emperors Yao and Shun, Springs and Autumns, the Book of POETry, etc.

To proceed, then, to the other great school of thought that emerged from China, Tãoism. It is based on the natural principles of heaven and earth, from which man has inherited his spirit and body, and considers the natural path totally sufficient, because all forms of acquiring knowledge have pitfalls and dangers of obstacles, wrong knowledge being so easy to be deceived into.

"The Tão ^(道 Road) that one can tread ^{one} is not the permanent, unchanging Tão. The name that ^{one} can name is not the permanent, unchanging name. The no-name is heaven and earth's beginning; the with-name is the 10,000 things' mother.⁸

"Heaven and earth are long enduring. Heaven and earth can endure for a long time because they do not live for themselves. Thus, the sage person puts his own person behind, and by so doing, is foremost. He puts aside his own body and by that his body abides. Is it not because he has no private ends? Therefore he well completes the self."⁹

These immense schools of thought all come directly to grips with the problem of words, and meaning, which we shall try to take up throughout the book. Here let it only be said that they are in complete agreement on this point, as Sakyamuni expressed it, "words are subject to birth and death, whereas meaning is not. Mahāmati, words are dependent on letters, but meaning is not. As meaning is freed from existence and non-existence, it is not born, it has no substratum...."¹⁰

And "...Language is not the ultimate truth; what is attainable

8 Lao Tzu, Tao Teh King, Bk. I. The no-name 無名 and with-name 有名 are the same terms used in Buddhism, in discussions of being and not being.

9 Ibid., translated by this author.

10 D. T. Suzuki, The Lankavatara Sutra, p. 167.

by language is not the ultimate truth. Why? Because the ultimate truth is what is enjoyed by the wise; by means of speech one can enter into the truth, but words themselves are not the truth. It is the self-realisation inwardly experienced by the wise through their supreme wisdom, and does not belong to the domain of words, discrimination, or intelligence; and, therefore, discrimination does not reveal the ultimate truth itself. Moreover, O Mahamati, language is subject to birth and destruction, is unsteady, mutually conditioning, and produced according to the law of causation; and what is mutually conditioning and produced according to the law of causation is not the ultimate truth, nor does it come out of such conditions, for it is above aspects of relativity, and words are incapable of producing it. And again, as the ultimate truth is in conformity with the view that the visible world is no more than our own mind, and as there are no such external objects appearing in their multifarious aspects of individuation, the ultimate truth is not subject to discrimination."¹¹

Words cannot say the ultimate truth, but how close can they come to pointing it ^{directly at}, or causing the realization of it to be imminent?

an acknowledgement of the inheritance of Starting with these basic truths, Japanese literature was to be blessed with further good fortune in 1) the establishment of Buddhism as the country's doctrine, and 2) the formation of a unique alphabet.

11 I. T. Suzuki, Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra, 1930, pp. 244-5.

Syootoku Taisi (572-621), son of the Emperor Yoomei, became Regent in the reign of the Empress Suiko (to whom he was nephew), and he is the central figure in the Asuka period (552-646). He was the first to send an official embassy to China (in 607). In 604 he adopted the Chinese calendar, and made a proclamation of the fundamental principles of state organization, known as the Seventeen-Articled Constitution. Some sources say this code was based on a Chinese original. The Seventeen Articles combine Buddhist, Confucian and Sin'too thought, and are the laying down of the proper course of vast bene^ovolence for governing a country-- how to keep the whole in mind.. For example,

1. Make harmoniousness that which to esteem. No going-against-things should be the principal thing. People all have their associates; there are few people who understand things. Hence some do not accord with the lord or father, and some who disagree with neighbouring villages. When those above are in harmony and those below friendly, in the discussion of things there is harmony, and things naturally come to agreement. What is there that cannot succeed?

2. Deeply respect the Three Treasures-- the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.¹ They are where the four kinds of living things finally return to and take refuge in, and all countries' most excellent source and principle. What generation, what people would not esteem this dharma? Among people, there are few who are extremely bad. By means of teaching them, they learn to follow it. If they do not take refuge in the Three Treasures, by what means can one correct their crookedness?

9. Genuine faith² is the root of the correct principle³. There should be genuine faith in everything (action). Excellence and badness, completion or failure all depend completely on (the presence or absence of) genuine faith. If lord and retainers have genuine faith, what is there that would not succeed? If lord and retainers have no genuine faith, all things would end in failure.

1 Dharma: this word generally means truth, principle, law, teaching. It can also mean anything or all things. In this case, the Buddha's teaching. Sangha: the monks, temples.

2 信 is the ideogram, and means sincerity, trust, belief.

3 義 means the way of human beings, i.e., to be true, loyal, just, to repay obligations, and so on.

15. To turn one's back to the private and face toward the public is the road of a minister. If one has a self, without fail there is resentment. When there is resentment, without fail one cannot harmonize. When there is no harmony, with the self one makes an obstacle for the public. When resentment arises, one goes against the correct and harms the dharma. Thus, as said in the first article, when above and below are in harmony, those and these will again have the same feeling.

16. When people need to be employed, let it be at the seasonal time, that is an excellent old rule. They did it in the Winter months when the people were at leisure. From Spring to Autumn are the times for agriculture and nourishing silkworms. The people should not then be made to work. If they did not farm, what would there be to eat? If they did not tend to the mulberry, what would there be to wear?

This Constitution was regarded
as the basis of national government, and hence, of the life of the people. Syootoku Taisi not only established Buddhism as the national teaching, but also encouraged learning from China and Korea (also Buddhist countries), began the building of Buddhist temples all over the country, and encouraged the practise of Buddhist art. The sageness of his contributions was continued by Kooboo Daisi a few hundred years later, through whom the flow of Indian and Chinese books was to reach a high point.

The letters of the Japanese alphabet have, as the Sanskrit letters, an ancient tradition of having been handed down by the Gods. The Indians say, "The God Brahmā arranged the letters of their alphabet and they were handed down from the first till now. They are forty-seven in number and are combined so as to form words according to the object and according to circumstances (of time or place). There are other forms (inflections) used."⁺ The Japanese Sin'to books say that the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, bequeathed the forty-seven letters of the Japanese alphabet to the God who was to keep order over the islands of Japan, which were themselves born of the Gods. "She gave them to Teteanamuti-no Mikoto. After Teteana-no Mikoto received them, together with Amanoyakokoro-no Mikoto, they made the letters of the age of the Gods. By joining these forty-seven letters they made all words. Thus, from the age of the Gods until the age of human emperors these letters were in use, and high and low were able to accomplish all things through them." ²

The order of the letters transmitted by the Sun Goddess commences with what later became a children's counting song: Hi(totu), hu(tatu), mi(tu), yo(tu), i(tutu), mu(tu), na(natu), ya(tu), ko(konotu), to-- one to ten. "After that, Kooboo Daisi tied these forty-seven letters into phrases of seven syllables and made them easy to remember. He

+ Hsüan Tsang (603-664), in Si-Yu-Ki, Book Two, Records of the Western Countries. From S. Beal, Buddhist Records of the Western World, 1884, p. 77. Hsüan Tsang was a Chinese Buddhist monk who made a pilgrimage to India, and brought back to China 124 sutras of the Mahayana. His record of the India he saw is a valuable contribution to studies in Hinduism and Buddhism. The preface to this work states that he translated 657 works from Sanskrit to Chinese.

2 In Iroha-Mon-ben, Questions and Answers about the Iroha Alphabet, by the Monk Teinin' 諦忍, 1764. Kokugogaku Taikei, v. 7, 1949.

(Note 2 continued)

Ācārya means Master of the discipline and precepts, one of correct conduct, who has completed 'bringing to their fullest power his mind, body and words. Tainin' (1705-1786), also known as Myooryoo 妙龍, was the fifth Ācārya of Koosyoo-zi in present-day Nagoya, a temple of the Mantrayana (Sin'gon') school of Buddhism, founded by Kooboo Daisi.

* Sin'too 神道 The Way of the Gods, begins with the worship of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu and various 'deities connected with the creation of the islands of Japan, on down to the Gods of Harvest, Mountains, Rivers, etc. It embodies man's natural respect and awe of what are greater than himself and sustain him, i.e., Heaven and Earth. Purification and reverence are the practises which help man to repay the kindnesses of the deities.

re-wrote them from the grass writing ¹ 草書 letters of the T'ang and made them easier to write for the people of this empire. But the people of the world do not inform themselves of these details and only think that Kooboo Daisi made these forty-seven letters. But that is not exactly correct. Originally, as they came forth from the divine thought of the great Goddess Amaterasu, they are something inconceivable and inexhaustible...." ²

As is pointed out in the above passage, the number of letters in the Japanese hiragana alphabet is the same as in the basic Sanskrit, and it is not a matter of coincidence. The Buddhist monk Kuukai (774-835), now known by his posthumous honorific name, Kooboo Daisi, was the great figure who brought back to Japan after a few years of study in China, the Mantrayana ³ School of Buddhism. In Japanese it is called Sin'gon, True Words.

In Chang An, the T'ang capital, he studied with Hui Kuo (746-805), the ~~Seventh~~ Guru of this school, which had been spread there by the two Indian Gurus, ⁽⁶³⁷⁻⁷³⁵⁾ Subhakarasiṃha, ^{and Amoghavajra (705-774)} the ^{fifth and sixth} Gurus. ⁴ Another Indian, Prajñā, was his teacher of Sanskrit. Kuukai became the ^{eighth} Guru, and with that, The Chinese transmission of this great school came to an end and the teaching crossed to Japan.

For Japan, however, it was the opening up of limitless excellences. Not only did Kooboo Daisi invent the alphabets as they exist today ⁴ but he also began schools, the engineering of water ways, and established

1 Soosyoo, grass writing, is the free style of writing Chinese ideograms with one or a few strokes of the brush. This is how the hiragana alphabet is written.

2 Ibid. p. 50.

3 Otherwise known as the Tantric, Secret, Yogācārya School. The Gurus (Masters) are 1) Nāgārjuna, 2) Nāgabodhi, 3) Vajrabodhi

4) Amoghavajra, 5) Subhakarasiṃha, 6) I-hsing

7) Hui Kuo, 8) Kuukai.

Note 3 cont-d.)

Amoghavajra established the Chinese branch of this school around the year 720, based on Hsüan Tsang's translation into Chinese of the Yogacaryabhumi-śāstra . It is a work said to have been dictated to Asanga in the Tusita Heavens by Maitreya, the next Buddha to come. Amoghavajra translated 120 Tantric books from Sanskrit to Chinese, and Kuukai, having been transmitted the teaching from Amoghavajra's direct disciple, Hui Kuo, no doubt all of those works.

came to possess

numerous Buddhist temples, so that down to this day the magnificent flowering of Buddhism can still be seen, and the mantra "Namu Daisi Hen'syoo Kon'goo" can be heard. From the beginning of his studies, when he harmonized the three great schools of thought, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism (Sin'too)¹, to the end of his life, when he retired to sit in samadhi to await the next Buddha Maitreya, he showed indeed, how man can reach to his utmost power.

During the reign of the Emperor Oozin' (c.270-310) Chinese characters were brought to Japan, and these were used for syllables. It was a painstaking task to write these complex characters. The hiragana alphabet, the most standardly used in writing, is based on characters but reduced to one or two strokes per character. The tradition is that the Buddha Fudoo Myoo-Oo² appeared to him on a boulder among ocean waves and transmitted the secrets connected with this alphabet, a mantra in the form of the poem:

iro ha nihoheto

Coloured leaves have a perfume but

tiri nuru wo

as they scatter

waka yo tare so

in our world who is there

tune naramu

that has permanence;

uwi no oku-yama

the deep mountain of griefs

kehu koete

today is crossed,

asaki yume misi

shallow dreams will not be seen

wehi mo sesu n'.

nor will there be drunkenness.

いろはにほへと

ちりぬるを

わかよたれそ

つねならむ

うゑのおくやま


けふこえて

あさきゆめみし

あきもせず人

A work called "A Model of The Three Teachings" = 教指歸

² Fudoo Myoo-Oo: Arya Acala, the Immovable Luminous King, a manifested form of Vairocana, the central Buddha. He is represented in angry form with weapons and fire with which to subdue demons and

The last syllable, -n', it is said, was added by Den'gyoo Daisi¹ and is called kyoo, "capital city". It represents the principle of the dharma nature, the realm of the Thusness Capital, the real Royal City. This concept is equivalent to the "no arising of thought in-stants" in the Zen' school, ^{and the returning to the root within oneself.} It is the  of Aum, the dot representing Vairocana Buddha, the source of everything, and the crescent Akshobhya Buddha, or mirror-like wisdom.

The Iroha poem is made of 7-syllable and 5-syllable lines and is said to be the beginning of the imayo form of Japanese poetry.³

According to one of the numerous biographies (Kooboo Daisi Es Den' ~~14th~~ c. 12 of Kooboo Daisi the four phrases of this poem are parallel to the gatha in the Nirvana Sutra:

"All actions are impermanent:

This is the birth-death dharma;

Birth-death completely destroyed,

The serene destruction makes ease.

諸行無常
是生滅法

生滅滅已
寂滅為樂

(2 lines
each phrase)

Gyoozyoo
E-kotoba

(12
vol)

1374-79

3 The original occurrence of this meter is in Buddhist sutras where they occur as Bon'san 梵讚, verses in praise of the God Brahma.

1

Den'gyoo Daisi: 767-822, founder of the Ten'dai school of Buddhism in Japan. En'ryaku Zi, Mt. Hiei. Contemporary of Kooboo Daisi, they were in China for their studies at the same time.

2

Kooboo Daisi Gyoozyoo e Kotoba 弘法大師行狀繪詞傳
1374-79 (12 vol)

"The first phrase describes the realm of scattering flowers and falling leaves that one sees in front of the eyes, and contains the phrases of the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra (Goto is emptiness, or void. The void is color). The second in perceiving the impermanence of the world reproaches the self. The third represents crossing over the steep mountain of being--possessing the klesas (obscuring, muddy passions, such as greed, covetousness, jealousy, anger, etc.) and reaching the realm of no-klesas and the real laksana (form or attribute). The fourth is a waking from the dream of the samsara (the ocean of rebirths), and a wearing off of the wine of ignorance, non-luminosity and the klesas; all things have no differentiation.

Form

字母弘三乘

"The Sanskrit letters spread the Three Vehicles (the teaching of the Buddha Sakyamuni)

真言演四句

(Mantrayana) (the Iroha poem) explains the Four Phrases (of the Nirvana Sutra)."

弘法大師
絵詞傳

Nehan'-kyo

Kooboo Daisi incorporated the secret teachings of the Tantric schools and the various Siddham Sanskrit letters with the teachings of the Buddha and ancient Chinese scriptures. The katakana alphabet which many also credit to Kooboo Daisi, is arranged phonetically in the order of the Siddham Sanskrit alphabet in a chart of 50 letters which are categorized according to the 5 vowels running against the 9 consonant sounds (making the 14 basic sounds mentioned in the Chapter on Letters in the Nirvana Sutra).

ア	ヤ	ウ	エ	イ	依	夜	譽	園
カ	カ	カ	カ	カ	梨	摩	哆	墟
ク	ク	ク	ク	ク	茂	氣	列	坡
ケ	ケ	ケ	ケ	ケ	世	普	蘇	爾
コ	コ	コ	コ	コ	數	古	厨	鋪
セ	セ	セ	セ	セ	會	年	汨	
ソ	ソ	ソ	ソ	ソ	轉	奈	塔	

シ	シ	シ	シ	シ	亞	羅	知
ス	ス	ス	ス	ス	準	務	利
セ	セ	セ	セ	セ	紀	有	努
テ	テ	テ	テ	テ	廋	彙	流
ト	ト	ト	ト	ト	馬	能	汗
ナ	ナ	ナ	ナ	ナ	味	於	資
ネ	ネ	ネ	ネ	ネ	紫	胸	嘉

The reason for the discrepancy from 47 to 50 letters is that yi, ye, wu are taken to be the same as i, e and u in the iroha set.

In this way, Japanese literature from its early beginnings, was to blend and weave the threads of the highest points of Indian and Chinese thought, with their own, to form in itself a great teaching and Road. If it speaks of the woes and sufferings of the sangsara, it will show how to transform them into delight. Having crossed over the mountain of grief, it will speak of what is really there, behind the worldly illusions, all the time. The difference lies only in the reader's mind, which side of the border he prefers to abide in.

"How deep and incomparable was Kooboo Daisi's thought in causing men, women and children who didn't know letters, to repeat the iroha poem, to let them even dimly know about the meaning of the Buddha dharma..."¹

The origins and Ends of Kana, The alphabets.

1 Kana no Motosue, by Tomo Sin'yuu 假字本末、伴信友.
1848-50, in Kokugogaku Taikei, v. 7.

Up to the opening of Japan to the West in 1868,
learning began with the study of the Chinese classics and poetry.

The ancient story of the great Chinese poet Po Chu'i's¹ visit to Japan to measure the wisdom of the Japanese for the T'ang emperor tells that the first person he met as his boat approached its shores was an old fisherman. He asked, "What do people of Japan practise and take delight in?" At which the fisherman replied, "Well, in China what do the people practise and take delight in?" Po Chu'i replied--"In China, we write Chinese poetry." The fisherman said, "In Japan, by writing Japanese poetry people's hearts are consoled." "And what is Japanese poetry?" enquired the Chinese poet. The fisherman answered, "We take India's sacred letters and China's poetry and harmonize them; hence we call our poetry Yamato uta (the great harmony). But let us have an example of your poetry."

1. His dates are 772-846. In Japanese, his name is Hakurakuten¹ slightly different from the Chinese way of writing his name 白居易. The version of the story here is from the Noo play, Hakurakuten 白樂天.

Po Chu'i recited:

白雲似帶圍山腰

"White clouds like a sash encircle the mountain's hips,

青苔如衣負巖背

Green moss like a garment covers the boulder's back."

The fisherman replied with a Japanese poem:

苔衣 著たる巖は さもなくて

"In a moss garment / dressed, the boulder- / while it has none itself, /

衣 きぬ山の 帯をすかな

for the silk-clothed mountain / a sash it makes."

Po Chu'i: "Unbelievable! You are an old fisherman, and yet you can put together a wonderful poem like that! Who are you?"

Fisherman: "Nobody special....I have no name. But to make poetry is not limited to human beings. Every thing that has life makes poetry.... that means, down to birds and beasts...they too make poetry; in our country, there are many examples of such waka."²

The admiration of the Chinese poet was great; he returned to China to report that Japan was not a country to be subdued. This was in the times when in both China and Japan the heads of government were people accomplished in poetry, which was a test of high understanding and benevolence. With a government regulated in this way, it was thought that the people could elevate themselves and the country would be glorified.

Chinese poetry was not only closely studied in Japan, it was also composed side by side with Japanese poetry. The last great haizai³, Masaoka Siki, wrote Chinese poetry, Japanese poetry, and haiku. The continuity of this way of learning was not broken until the introduction of Western-style educational systems.

2. Waka, another name for the 31-syllabled Japanese poem; "harmony song."

3. Haizai'--one who makes haiku.

What is it in Chinese poetry that was so admired by the Japanese for so many centuries? It is difficult to describe, but something like the refinement and clarity of mind and words possible only from a total detachment from matters of worldly nature. Amidst the creations of heaven and earth, Chinese poetry revealed the true role of man and his words.

So it is that those whose role it was to write haiku, continually referred to Chinese poetry, which they knew by heart, especially those of the flowering age of the T'ang Dynasty (c. 618-907 A.D.). There is one poem which it is of interest to quote here, because it brings us to the first use of the word haiku.

翻手作雲 覆手雨

Face the palm up, make clouds, turn it over, make rain,

紛紛輕薄何須數

Like grains of powder, the light and thin,--how can we count their numbers?

君不見管鮑貧時交

Don't you see Kwan and Pao's poverty-time friendship?⁴

此道今人棄如土

This road today's people throw away like dust.

-- 杜甫 T'u Fu (712-770)

4. Kwan and Pao are two men written of in Confucius' Springs and Autumns Annals 春秋 (c. 500 B.C.). Kwan was always in poverty and borrowed money from his friend Pao. Despite the slander of people, Pao remained true to his poor friend and did not let such a trivial matter as money change his feelings.

The first two lines mean,--as quick as a flip of the hand is the changeableness of people's hearts; such insincere ones (whose hearts are light and thin) are so great in number, like dust in air, that we cannot count them. The last two lines: Don't you see what it means to be sincere? One must, even though people nowadays throw away the road of sincerity and loyalty as though it were dust.

Kikaku, one of the Ten Great Disciples of Basyoo, first records the word haiku in his "turn" on T'u Fu's poem.

翻手作雲覆手雨

Face the palm up, make clouds, turn it over, make rain,

紛紛俳句何須數

Like grains of powder, haiku--how can we count their numbers?

世不見宗鑑貧時

The world doesn't look at Sookan's⁵ poverty time;

此道今人棄如土

This road today's people throw away like dust.

-- Kikaku 其角 (1661-1707)

The *few* changes made by Kikaku are from "light and thin" to "haiku",

5 Sookan' 宗鑑 c. 1458-1546, Buddhist monk and poet. He edited the first book of Japanese Haikai compositions, Inu Tukubasyuu 犬

"Kwan and Pao" to "Sookan'", "you" to the world". However, by these alone he makes it possible for anyone to grasp the ultimate meaning of haiku. Sookan', because he showed how any road in the countryside can be made the Buddha Road; the world, because haiku are for the world, not only a few limited individuals. By replacing all the myriad "light and thin" with haiku, he is saying that if you fill the universe with haiku, even the light and thin will be transformed. Haiku, like cherry flower petals, will scatter over the world for all to see and improve themselves from.

But let us try and define the basic terms in this book; *firstly, in a practical way, so that the reader can identify them. Their fuller definitions will have to be formulated after all the pertinent material has been presented.* This subject has been as grossly misrepresented to the West as Zen' and all of Japanese literature has been. It is the purpose of this book to replace the feeble, limited reactions to these immense subjects with the real facts and true value of haikai, so that the whole world can *awake from the dream state and get on with the real things.*

俳 Hai means playful, amusing, to joke, to
 ramble. It is made up of 人 man, and
 非 not--not man. Hence the first meaning of haiku is:
not about man.

句 Ku: This means words that don't come to a
 completion, a clause or a phrase, the shortest duration
 of syllables for making a thought-group. A Japanese
 poem is made up of 長句 the tyoo-ku (long ku),
 three lines of 5, 7 and 5 syllables, and 短句 the
 tan-ku (short ku), two lines of 7 and 7 syllables. This
 word also means, more generally, a stop, turn, or bend.
 In regard to words they are those which bend and make
 a joint. In a sentence, it is the point where the
 strength is divided and a joint made.

俳句 Haiku: playful compositions not about man,
 but about seasons.

俳諧 Haikai: Kai is 言 words and 皆
 everyone or all things. To regulate words and all
 things, harmonize, accord with.

Haikai: playful harmony. This word is what this book
 is about, and its meanings as they changed through
 many centuries are recorded. The basic meaning which
 underlies all its stages is: The use of humorous,
 playful words in teaching propriety and the way human
 beings may improve themselves.

Kikaku in his Chinese poem uses the word "haiku" as an abbreviation for haikai-ku, because this poem appears as a preface to the haikai collection Minasiguri⁶ which contains four kasen' (36-ku ren'ga), and haikai for the Basyoo School means not only hokku but also ren'ga. So Kikaku's "haiku" are ku that are hai.

6 Empty Chestnut 虚栗, 1683, noted for being the work that shows the emergence of Basyoo's distinct style of haikai.

連歌

Ren'ga: connected poems, sometimes written

聯歌

ren'ga, continuing poems. It is one of

the forms of Japanese poetry, that in its early beginnings was in the form of two ku, the first in three lines of 5-7-5 syllables, the second written by another person, in two lines of 7-7 syllables. This gradually grew longer, another ku of 5-7-5 being added and followed by yet another ku of 7-7 syllables.

By the Muromati period (around 1392), one ren'ga could go on to a hundred ku in series. At times even ten people participated, and sometimes one person would do all hundred ku ^{up to 3000 ku} as a practice.

Ren'ga at its longest extended to a thousand and even 10,000 ku. In the Basyoo school the most standard form of ren'ga is 36 ku, called 歌仙 kasen.

The term "haiku" did not come to be popularly used, however, until the time of Masaoka Siki, who directed his energy towards reviving haikai. By the year Meidi 30 (1895), with the publication of the collection 新俳句 Sin' Haiku (New Haiku), the term haiku was established and accepted by the general public. The meaning of his haiku, however, is hokku.

發

means to begin, to arise, to move, to come out, to emerge.

發句

Hokku: the term given to the first ku of a ren'ga; because it arises, the rest of the ku, whether 36 or 10,000 in number, are possible.

As Asano says, "haiku" takes hai 俳 of haikai, and 句 ku of hokku... haiku is the hokku of haikai made independent."

7 Asano, S., A Study of Haiku's Previous History
Tokyo, 1949, pp 3, 43.

One of the basic truths which underlie haikai is the concept of the world in its eternal (unchanging) and constantly changing aspects. Basyoo called this hueki-ryuukoo 不易流行. It was not his invention, however, but like all root Japanese ideas, goes back to ancient China and India⁸, and is at the base of all valid examples of Japanese literature. It is a very profound principle, without the understanding of which we have now reached to the infinite ghosts of "changes" we presently see in our world.

These terms are discussed more fully later, but a word should be said herein order to explain why the International Haiku Project began with the subject of Siki's haiku. The eternal aspect (hueki) is the source and cause of the universe with all its material objects and changes-- and all the manifestations of the universe--from the flowers of Spring and the birds of Autumn, down to the concept of haikai-- all contain the eternal aspect (or they would never have come to being). In the matter of human concepts, however, it is for the people to see to it that the next style of haikai, for example, is true and valid. It can only be true and valid if it contains the eternal, which, to our times, has been reachable through the study of sage teachings. The eternal is the same as the eternal in any person, his real Buddha nature. Once that is thoroughly seen, then the person is able to make the correct changes and they will be true and beneficial to all mankind, for they will again show how the next generation's people can reach to the eternal.

Siki, the last thread of the long continuity of Japanese thought, shows exactly as Basyoo shows-- how to do that which is most important for man to do, or all he does in a lifetime is in vain. Siki's haiku show how, for the twentieth century, any one can enter into haikai

⁸ The Buddha Sakyamuni taught this principle and called it The Limitless Principle. This sutra is translated in the appendix of this book. The classical Chinese example that deals with this concept is the I-Ching, or Book of Changes.

and make the connection to the universal and the true. His school is our immediate gateway . If we enter it, we are on the right road, and though it may be a long one, it is full of hope.

For these reasons, the International Haiku Project was carried out for three years under the generous auspices of the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Pure Science and the Faculty of Letters of the National University of Groningen, to include in the machinery of these times 10,000 haiku of the Siki School, so that these truths may continue their real changes in a computer data base. The results of those three short years of research will at last be published in volumes.

May they serve to promote the real good fortunes of all living beings, and the increase of cherry flower petals throughout the world.

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H.S. Isaacson